

Anderson, IN – U.S. Congressman Mike Pence applauded the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) announcement that it is designating 55 counties in Indiana as disaster areas due to drought conditions, as well as improvements to the disaster designation process, which will help deliver quicker assistance to farmers and ranchers.

"Hoosier farmers across the state are hurting due to the severe and ongoing drought," said Pence. "I've seen the devastating effects our dry spring and summer have had on Hoosier crops and support the USDA's decision to bring much-needed assistance to the heartland.

"In Indiana we grow things and we make things. When agriculture is hurting, we all hurt. However, Hoosier farmers have weathered tough times before and I am confident we will do so again."

The following counties across Indiana have been declared disaster areas by the federal government:

Adams, Allen, Blackford, Carroll, Cass, Clay, Clinton, Crawford, Daviess, DeKalb, Delaware, Dubois, Elkhart, Fulton, Gibson, Grant, Greene, Harrison, Howard, Huntington, Jackson, Jasper, Jay, Knox, Kosciusko, Lagrange, La Porte, Lawrence, Madison, Marshall, Martin, Miami, Monroe, Noble, Orange, Owen, Perry, Pike, Posey, Pulaski, Starke, St. Joseph, Spencer, Steuben, Sullivan, Tippecanoe, Tipton, Vanderburgh, Vigo, Wabash, Warrick, Washington, Wells, White, and Whitley.

#### Background:

There are three significant improvements to USDA programs and processes related to the Secretarial disaster designations: a final rule that simplifies the process for Secretarial disaster designations and will result in a 40 percent reduction in processing time for most counties affected by disasters; a reduced interest rate for emergency loans that effectively lowers the current rate from 3.75 percent to 2.25 percent; and reduces the payment reduction on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands qualified for emergency haying and grazing in 2012 from 25 to 10 percent.

The USDA encourages all farmers and ranchers to contact their crop insurance companies and local USDA Farm Service Agency Service Centers, as applicable, to report damages to crops or

livestock loss. More information about federal crop insurance may be found at [www.rma.usda.gov](http://www.rma.usda.gov). Additional resources to help farmers and ranchers deal with flooding may be found at <http://www.usda.gov/disaster>

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